

the progress of the Lord's work in recent years can testify that the facts fully bear out this conclusion. The ones coming to the truth in more recent years may well be those described by the Prophet Isaiah, who with joy draw waters of truth out of the wells of salvation, praise the Lord and call upon his name, and proclaim his doings amongst the people, making mention that Jehovah's name is exalted. (Isa. 12:2-4) This they do unselfishly. Others have been favored with the truth but they have not shown such zeal for and devotion to the Lord. Therefore Esther pictures those who are diligent in hearing and obeying God's Word. "Her things for purification" symbolized the work and preparation of the prospective members of the bride class who are candidates for a place in God's kingdom as the bride of Christ.—Eph. 5:26, 27.

The spirit-begotten ones are represented as "the sons of Levi" who must be purified upon the coming of the Lord to his temple. (Mal. 3:3) He sits for that very purpose. The purified ones would therefore be foreshadowed by Esther at this stage of the drama. The seven maids given to Esther corresponded to the ministration provided for and rendered to the consecrated by "the seven stars" or angels in the court of Jesus Christ who attend at the temple. "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) After the holy spirit as an advocate or paraclete ceased to function in behalf of the consecrated, then the angels are employed in behalf of those who are being made ready for the kingdom. "For he

shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."—Ps. 91:11. (See *The Watchtower*, 1930, pages 163, 179.)

The record is that Esther and her maidens were preferred (meaning "changed", *margin*) from the place she had occupied and she was given the best place in the house for the women. This was God's gracious provision for her. Likewise God had caused favor to be shown to Daniel and his three companions during the days of their preparation for presentation to the king. (See Daniel 1:9.) Thus is foreshadowed the favorable conditions that the Lord provides for those who have responded to the call for the kingdom to make preparation therefor. Among those who have come to a knowledge of the truth since 1922 are those pictured by Esther, and they have had the best place in the service of the Lord because they have participated in the service with real joy and enthusiasm. They have not been looking at the matter from a selfish standpoint, but their unselfish devotion to the Lord and his cause has shown forth their beauty. Appropriate to these are the words of Proverbs 22:29: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." These faithful ones were showing worthy traits before the Lord, and this the Lord has rewarded by his unchanging favor.

#### HER IDENTITY

It was not then known at the palace that Esther was a Hebrewess. There was good rea-

operate for and in behalf of his spirit-begotten ones, to lead, guide, help, advocate for and comfort such. Elimelech was the head and leader of his household; and since he must have gone into Moab according to the will of God, Naomi must have been led there by him and also according to the will of God. Barnabas and Paul were sent forth by the holy spirit, as it is written: "And while they were serving the Lord and fasting, the holy spirit said, 'Separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I called them.' Then having fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them forth. They, therefore, having been sent out by the holy spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." (Acts 13:2-4, *Diag.*) This is proof of the leading or guiding of the holy spirit.

There is nothing in the record that would indicate that Elimelech or Naomi was doing or did anything displeasing to God; therefore they must have gone into Moab according to the will of the King Eternal, even as the name Elimelech signifies, "My God is King." Criticism of Elimelech's course would therefore be out of order. God's people found themselves in the midst of Satan's organization and oppressed by military power from the year 1914 to 1918, and surely they were not in that condition because of any displeasure on the part of God towards them, even though some thought so. The spirit of Jehovah God led them into that condition that his purposes might be accomplished. By his spirit, the holy spirit, Jehovah God guides

or leads his people up to a certain point of time, and thus he did until the time when "the comforter" was taken away, which would necessarily occur when Jesus, the Head of his organization, came to the temple and gathered unto himself those whom he found faithful when he, as the great Judge, began his judgment, in 1918.

The proper name "Naomi" is found only in the book of Ruth. It means "pleasant", that is to say, pleasing to Jehovah, as it is written: "A wise son maketh a glad father." (Prov. 10:1) "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me." (Prov. 27:11) 'God sets the members in the body of Christ according to his pleasure.' (1 Cor. 12:18) "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. 16:5, 6) Those who are devoted to God please him when dwelling together in peace. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1) "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words." (Prov. 15:26) "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (Prov. 3:12, 13, 17) "Be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being